

JAMES ALEXANDER HUTCHISON

GEORGE E. ARMSTRONG, M.D., F.A.C.S., MONTREAL, QUEBEC

DR. HUTCHISON was born in Montreal and received his early education at the Montreal High School. His parents then moved to Goderich, Ontario, and there he attended the Goderich Collegiate Institute from which he passed to McGill University.

He graduated from the Medical Faculty of McGill in 1884. At the time that he graduated he had not quite attained his majority and went to Edinburgh for further study and obtained the degree of L.R.C.P. & S. (Edin.).

On returning to Montreal he began as a general practitioner. In 1891 he was appointed surgeon to the Out-patient Department of the Montreal General Hospital, and in 1894 became full surgeon, which position he filled until 1924.

Dr. Hutchison was appointed demonstrator in clinical surgery in McGill University in 1898, and was made associate professor in surgery in 1913 and emeritus professor, in 1923.

As a surgeon Dr. Hutchison was highly esteemed by the profession, and trusted and loved by his patients. He was a painstaking diagnostician and a careful, almost meticulous, operator, and his results would bear the closest scrutiny. As a consulting surgeon he was in demand over a wide area.

Dr. Hutchison taught surgery to the students of McGill for twenty-six years. His bedside clinics in the wards of the Montreal General Hospital were models of bedside teaching. He had a gift for inspiring in students an inquiring mind, careful observation, and care in reaching logical conclusions. He taught them how to examine patients without inflicting unnecessary pain or discomfort. His cheerful manner and gentle ways were an object lesson to his students which were never forgotten. His theater clinics were clear, always to the point, and so carefully prepared that his class always dispersed feeling that they had got something to hang their hat on. It is to be noted that with all his outside interests, it was only on the rarest occasions that he missed a clinic or lecture, and never without timely provision of a substitute. He was always highly esteemed by the student body.

For thirty-five years Dr. Hutchison was chief medical officer of the Grand Trunk Railway and of the Canadian National Railway into which the Grand Trunk was merged. It was a great responsibility. It meant the appointment and supervision of a large army of district surgeons, the organization of a pension fund,

provision for first aid in emergencies, and the consideration of the many claims made against a railway for real and imaginary injuries. In the settlement of these claims he had an almost uncanny faculty, due, I think, to his thorough investigation and determination of the facts and to his fair and judicial mind. In this field he won not only the confidence of the railway officials but that of the courts. He always had a loyal following in his district surgeons. He treated them fairly and they in their turn were faithful to their chief.

Dr. Hutchison was twice married, first to Jessie Caverhill who died in 1899 leaving three sons and one daughter, Mrs. Edmund Newcombe. One cannot speak in too high praise of Dr. Hutchison as a father. He made intimate companions of his sons and his daughter and three more manly and honorable young men and a more charming wife and mother than his daughter are not to be found.

In 1922 he married Jane Purdy, who survives him.

Before the war Dr. Hutchison was made Hon. Associate of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem for his work in stimulating First Aid.

Dr. Hutchison had a truly enviable war record. In February, 1916, he was sent overseas to prepare, for the Canadian Government, a special report on the re-establishment of wounded and disabled soldiers. On the completion of this report, he joined the Canadian Army Medical Corps as Surgeon to No. 1 Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, in June, 1916. In April, 1917, he was appointed chief surgeon at Moore Barracks, and in May, 1918, was made consulting surgeon to the Canadian Forces in England which post he occupied until the close of the war.

Dr. Hutchison's three sons served as combatant officers for the duration of the war, and, although two of them were wounded, one of them twice, they recovered and father and sons returned home alive and comparatively well.

In appreciation of his services in the Army Medical Corps he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire on the recommendation of the War Office.

Dr. Hutchison contributed the article on "Railway Surgery" in *American Practice of Surgery* by Bryant and Buck, and also valuable surgical papers to Canadian and American medical journals.

He was local secretary of the British Medical Association at its meeting in Montreal in 1897; a Fellow of the American Surgical Association, and Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Dr. Hutchison was fond of horses and in his earlier years always had a fine pair. He is greatly missed in professional and social circles. He was a genial and entertaining companion with a great sense of humor and an attractive personality.



J. ALEXANDER HUTCHISON
1863-1929

